

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-15 SAM-01 IO-10 /099 W

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R 241442Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 845

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

UNCLAS LISBON 4613

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PO, PT, ID

SUBJ: GOP STATEMENT ON FUTURE OF TIMOR

1. IN OCTOBER 22 PRESS CONFERENCE UPON RETURN FROM FAR EAST, PORTUGUESE MINISTER OF INTERTERRITORIAL COORDINATION ALMEIDA SANTOS COMMENTED ON THE FUTURE OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR.

2. SANTOS SAID INDONESIA AS WELL AS AUSTRALIA HAVE NO TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS TOWARDS TIMOR, AND NOTED JAKARTA'S FEAR THAT "PREMATURE INDEPENDENCE COULD BRING WITH IT A FORM OF NEOCOLONIALISM."

3. SANTOS SAID THE GOP PLANS ON HOLDING A "POPULAR CONSULTATION" IN TIMOR, PROBABLY IN THE FORM OF ELECTIONS FOR A CONSTITUTENT ASSEMBLY TO DRAFT A CONSTITUTION RATHER THAN A REFERENDUM. AFTER NOTING TIMORESE "TRUE LOVE FOR PORTUGAL," SANTOS ADDED, "WE MUST PROCEED WITH THE PROCESS OF DECOLONIZATION WHICH ENCOMPASSES NOT A FEDERATIVE SOLUTION, BUT AN INTEGRATION OF TIMOR INTO A PORTUGUESE
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COMMUNITY. THIS SOLUTION IS DESTINED TO SAFEGUARD THE TIES

WHICH UNITE THAT TERRITORY WITH THE MOTHER COUNTRY."

4. COMMENT: FOREIGN MINISTRY STATES THAT CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY COULD BE ELECTED AS SOON AS 1975. GOP WORRIES THAT HIGH DEGREE OF ILLITERACY WILL MAKE WHOLE PROCESS VERY DIFFICULT. MINISTRY THINKS PORTUGAL QUITE WILLING TO SEE TIMOR BECOME INDEPENDENT OR ASSOCIATE ITSELF WITH INDONESIA IF THAT IS TRUE WISH OF TIMORESE. PORTUGAL'S INTENT IS SIMPLY TO INSURE THAT DECOLONIZATION IS CARRIED OUT IN HONORABLE FASHION. HOWEVER, FOREIGN MINISTRY AND ALMEIDA SANTOS SHARE VIEW, AND HOPE, HELD BY MANY PORTUGUESE THAT DUE TO LONG TIME ASSOCIATION WITH PORTUGAL, TIMORESE WILL OPT FOR SOME TYPE OF SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH PORTUGAL. GOP DOES NOT SHARE VIEW, APPARENTLY HELD BY INDONESIA, THAT THERE IS SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT IN TIMOR FOR JOINING INDONESIA.
SCOTT

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SELFDETERMINATION, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LISBON04613
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740304-0307
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741020/aaaaaqug.tel
Line Count: 78
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 MAR 2002 by chappeld>; APPROVED <11 FEB 2003 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOP STATEMENT ON FUTURE OF TIMOR
TAGS: PFOR, PO, PT, ID
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005